

Positive Co-parenting Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Encourage children's time with their other parent, as well as visits with grandparents and members of the other parent's family.
- Encourage phone contact with the other parent, or other parent's family members.
- Have your child ready for pick-up (or help with transportation) when it is time to see the other parent.
- Reassure your child that he or she will be able to see the other parent.
- Speak positively (or at least neutrally) about a parent your child sees less often; keep that parent's presence "alive" in the child when they are not together (e.g., "Oh you have to remember to show Daddy this picture you drew when you see him in a few days. He'd love this one.>").
- Forward all emails concerning your children's activities, including changes and cancellations, to the other parent.
- Inform the other parent about school and day care conferences, and if you get along well enough, schedule them at a time you both can attend.
- Allow extra time for your child to be with the other parent on special occasions.
- Be supportive to the other parent, especially in times of crisis.

DON'T

- Choose to carry the weight of parenting by yourself; get help to make it work better for both of you.
- Insist on primary responsibility for childrearing as if no other parent exists.
- Criticize the other parent's behavior to your child or to another grownup when your child is listening.
- Undermine or refuse to comply with the other parent's time with the child or care giving plans.
- Forget or refuse to inform the other parent of significant events in your child's life.
- Give up on finding a way to support the other parent's ability to work with you regarding your child's developmental needs or extra support that he/she may require.
- Change schedules at the last minute so that the other parent cannot maintain plans to see the child, or refuse requests for change that allow the other parent to see the children at another time when work or other events interfere with regular parenting schedules.

Gatekeeping occurs when one parent supports or hinders the other parent's time/relationship with their child.